

MODESTO, CALIF.
BEE

E. 35,429

S. 35,188

APR 26 1961

Role Of CIA In Cuban Affair Raises Question

The resolute statement of President John F. Kennedy placing the United States on the side of Cuban freedom must have been heartening to the American people as they have watched with anguish the unhappy events in the Caribbean.

At the same time a serious question has been raised about the propriety of the actions of the central intelligence agency and the extent to which its activities prevented the president from making an uninhibited decision in a matter of grave importance to our national security and our prestige.

James B. Reston, Washington bureau chief of the New York Times, has written that the decision to arm and assist the Cuban rebels was made during the Eisenhower administration. When Kennedy took office he was faced with the difficult choice of continuing the aid despite warnings of great risks or else of cutting off the assistance and running the danger of extinguishing the carefully nurtured flames of Cuban revolt.

Reston reports the president made his decision to continue the support on the basis of CIA estimates and against the advice of Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Undersecretary Chester Bowles.

It is impossible properly to judge the president's action as reported by Reston. There is too much that is not known by the public.

But to the extent that the report correctly pictures the CIA as having presented the new president with a nearly completed Cuban invasion plan there is basis for serious criticism.

The CIA is an agency operating with no congressional controls on a vast budget for which it makes no accounting.

There is a need for an agency such as the CIA to assist the president in carrying out national policy. But when these efforts become so far reaching that a decision to cancel a CIA project would cause major repercussions then things have got out of hand. If that is the case the CIA is playing a major role in determining national policy rather than simply implementing it.

This is obviously wrong and dangerous. The people want President Kennedy to make national policy. They do not want the CIA's free wheeling activities to dictate or inhibit the president's course of action.

The above editorial also appeared
in the following other newspapers:

SACRAMENTO BEE, CALIF. - APR 26, 1961
FRESNO BEE, CALIF. - APR 26, 1961